

Description and Purpose

Dewatering operations are practices that manage the discharge of pollutants when non-stormwater and accumulated precipitation (stormwater) must be removed from a work location to proceed with construction work or to provide vector control.

The General Permit incorporates Numeric Effluent Limits (NEL) and Numeric Action Levels (NAL) for turbidity (see Section 2 of this handbook to determine your project's risk level and if you are subject to these requirements).

Discharges from dewatering operations can contain high levels of fine sediment that, if not properly treated, could lead to exceedences of the General Permit requirements.

Suitable Applications

These practices are implemented for discharges of non-stormwater from construction sites. Non-stormwaters include, but are not limited to, groundwater, water from cofferdams, water diversions, and waters used during construction activities that must be removed from a work area to facilitate construction.

Practices identified in this section are also appropriate for implementation when managing the removal of accumulated precipitation (stormwater) from depressed areas at a construction site.

Stormwater mixed with non-stormwater should be managed as non-stormwater.

Categories

EC	Erosion Control	
SE	Sediment Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TC	Tracking Control	
WE	Wind Erosion Control	
NS	Non-Stormwater Management Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
WM	Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control	

Legend:

- ☒ Primary Category
- ☒ Secondary Category

Targeted Constituents

Sediment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nutrients	
Trash	
Metals	
Bacteria	
Oil and Grease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Organics	

Potential Alternatives

- SE-5: Fiber Roll
- SE-6: Gravel Bag Berm



Limitations

- Dewatering operations will require, and should comply with applicable local and project-specific permits and regulations. In some areas, all dewatering activities, regardless of the discharge volume, require a dewatering permit.
- Site conditions will dictate design and use of dewatering operations.
- The controls discussed in this fact sheet primarily address sediment. Other secondary pollutant removal benefits are discussed where applicable.
- The controls detailed in this fact sheet only allow for minimal settling time for sediment particles. Use only when site conditions restrict the use of the other control methods.
- Avoid dewatering discharges where possible by using the water for dust control.

Implementation

- A Construction Site Monitoring Plan (CSMP) should be included in the project Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Regions may require notification and approval prior to any discharge of water from construction sites.
- The destination of discharge from dewatering activities will typically determine the type of permit required by the discharger. For example, when discharging to a water of the U.S., a groundwater extraction permit will be required through the site's governing RWQCB. When discharging to a sanitary sewer or Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), a permit may need to be obtained through the owner of the sanitary sewer or MS4 in addition to obtaining an RWQCB dewatering permit. Additional permits or permissions from other agencies may be required for dewatering cofferdams or diversions.
- Dewatering discharges should not cause erosion at the discharge point. Appropriate BMPs should be implemented to maintain compliance with all applicable permits.
- Maintain dewatering records in accordance with all local and project-specific permits and regulations.

Sediment Treatment

A variety of methods can be used to treat water during dewatering operations. Several devices are presented below and provide options to achieve sediment removal. The sediment particle size and permit or receiving water limitations on sediment are key considerations for selecting sediment treatment option(s); in some cases, the use of multiple devices may be appropriate. Use of other enhanced treatment methods (i.e., introduction of chemicals or electric current to enhance flocculation and removal of sediment) must comply with: 1) for storm drain or surface water discharges, the requirements for Active Treatment Systems (SE-11); or 2) for sanitary sewer discharges, the requirements of applicable sanitary sewer discharge permits.

Sediment Basin (see also SE-2)

Description:

- A sediment basin is a temporary basin with a controlled release structure that is formed by excavation or construction of an embankment to detain sediment-laden runoff and allow sediment to settle out before discharging. Sediment basins are generally larger than Sediment Traps (SE-3) and have a designed outlet structure.

Appropriate Applications:

- Effective for the removal of trash, gravel, sand, silt, some metals that settle out with the sediment.

Implementation:

- Excavation and construction of related facilities is required.
- Temporary sediment basins should be fenced if safety is a concern.
- Outlet protection is required to prevent erosion at the outfall location.

Maintenance:

- Maintenance is required for safety fencing, vegetation, embankment, inlet and outlet, as well as other features.
- Removal of sediment is required when the storage volume is reduced by one-third.

Sediment Trap (See also SE-3)

Description:

- A sediment trap is a temporary basin formed by excavation and/or construction of an earthen embankment across a waterway or low drainage area to detain sediment-laden runoff and allow sediment to settle out before discharging. Sediment traps are generally smaller than Sediment Basins (SE-2) and do not have a designed outlet (but do have a spillway or overflow).

Appropriate Applications:

Effective for the removal of large and medium sized particles (sand and gravel) and some metals that settle out with the sediment.

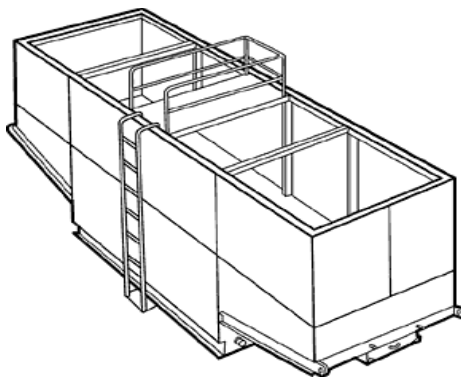
Implementation:

- Excavation and construction of related facilities is required.
- Trap inlets should be located to maximize the travel distance to the trap outlet.
- Use rock or vegetation to protect the trap outlets against erosion.

Maintenance:

- Maintenance is required for vegetation, embankment, inlet and outfall structures, as well as other features.
- Removal of sediment is required when the storage volume is reduced by one-third.

Weir Tanks



Description:

- A weir tank separates water and waste by using weirs. The configuration of the weirs (over and under weirs) maximizes the residence time in the tank and determines the waste to be removed from the water, such as oil, grease, and sediments.

Appropriate Applications:

- The tank removes trash, some settleable solids (gravel, sand, and silt), some visible oil and grease, and some metals (removed with sediment). To achieve high levels of flow, multiple tanks can be used in parallel. If additional treatment is desired, the tanks can be placed in series or as pre-treatment for other methods.

Implementation:

- Tanks are delivered to the site by the vendor, who can provide assistance with set-up and operation.
- Tank size will depend on flow volume, constituents of concern, and residency period required. Vendors should be consulted to appropriately size tank.
- Treatment capacity (i.e., volume and number of tanks) should provide at a minimum the required volume for discrete particle settling for treatment design flows.

Maintenance:

- Periodic cleaning is required based on visual inspection or reduced flow.
- Oil and grease disposal should be conducted by a licensed waste disposal company.

Dewatering Tanks



Description:

- A dewatering tank removes debris and sediment. Flow enters the tank through the top, passes through a fabric filter, and is discharged through the bottom of the tank. The filter separates the solids from the liquids.

Appropriate Applications:

- The tank removes trash, gravel, sand, and silt, some visible oil and grease, and some metals (removed with sediment). To achieve high levels of flow, multiple tanks can be used in parallel. If additional treatment is desired, the tanks can be placed in series or as pre-treatment for other methods.

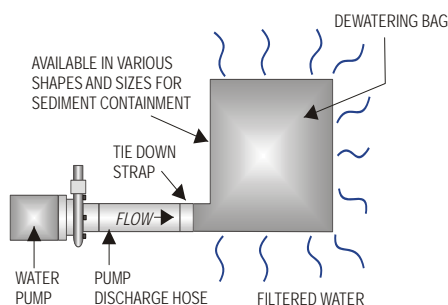
Implementation:

- Tanks are delivered to the site by the vendor, who can provide assistance with set-up and operation.
- Tank size will depend on flow volume, constituents of concern, and residency period required. Vendors should be consulted to appropriately size tank.

Maintenance:

- Periodic cleaning is required based on visual inspection or reduced flow.
- Oil and grease disposal should be conducted by licensed waste disposal company.

Gravity Bag Filter



Description:

- A gravity bag filter, also referred to as a dewatering bag, is a square or rectangular bag made of non-woven geotextile fabric that collects gravel, sand, silt, and fines.

Appropriate Applications:

- Effective for the removal of sediments (gravel, sand, silt, and fines). Some metals are removed with the sediment.

Implementation:

- Water is pumped into one side of the bag and seeps through the top, bottom, and sides of the bag.
- Place filter bag on pavement or a gravel bed or paved surface. Avoid placing a dewatering bag on unprotected bare soil. If placing the bag on bare soil is unavoidable, a secondary barrier should be used, such as a rock filter bed placed beneath and beyond the edges of the bag to, prevent erosion and capture sediments that escape the bag.
- Perimeter control around the downstream end of the bag should be implemented. Secondary sediment controls are important especially in the initial stages of discharge, which tend to allow fines to pass through the bag.

Maintenance:

- Inspection of the flow conditions, bag condition, bag capacity, and the secondary barrier (as applicable) is required.
- Replace the bag when it no longer filters sediment or passes water at a reasonable rate.
- Caution should be taken when removing and disposing of the bag, to prevent the release of captured sediment
- Properly dispose of the bag offsite. If sediment is removed from the bag prior to disposal (bags can potentially be reused depending upon their condition), dispose of sediment in accordance with the general maintenance procedures described at the end of this BMP Fact Sheet.

Sand Media Particulate Filter



Description:

- Water is treated by passing it through canisters filled with sand media. Generally, sand filters provide a final level of treatment. They are often used as a secondary or higher level of treatment after a significant amount of sediment and other pollutants have been removed using other methods.

Appropriate Applications:

- Effective for the removal of trash, gravel, sand, and silt and some metals, as well as the reduction of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and turbidity.
- Sand filters can be used for stand-alone treatment or in conjunction with bag and cartridge filtration if further treatment is required.
- Sand filters can also be used to provide additional treatment to water treated via settling or basic filtration.

Implementation:

- The filters require delivery to the site and initial set up. The vendor can provide assistance with installation and operation.

Maintenance:

- The filters require regular service to monitor and maintain the level of the sand media. If subjected to high loading rates, filters can plug quickly.
- Venders generally provide data on maximum head loss through the filter. The filter should be monitored daily while in use, and cleaned when head loss reaches target levels.
- If cleaned by backwashing, the backwash water may need to be hauled away for disposal, or returned to the upper end of the treatment train for another pass through the series of dewatering BMPs.

Pressurized Bag Filter



Description:

- A pressurized bag filter is a unit composed of single filter bags made from polyester felt material. The water filters through the unit and is discharged through a header. Vendors provide bag filters in a variety of configurations. Some units include a combination of bag filters and cartridge filters for enhanced contaminant removal.

Appropriate Applications:

- Effective for the removal of sediment (sand and silt) and some metals, as well as the reduction of BOD, turbidity, and hydrocarbons. Oil absorbent bags are available for hydrocarbon removal.
- Filters can be used to provide secondary treatment to water treated via settling or basic filtration.

Implementation:

- The filters require delivery to the site and initial set up. The vendor can provide assistance with installation and operation.

Maintenance:

- The filter bags require replacement when the pressure differential equals or exceeds the manufacturer's recommendation.

Cartridge Filter



Description:

- Cartridge filters provide a high degree of pollutant removal by utilizing a number of individual cartridges as part of a larger filtering unit. They are often used as a secondary or higher (polishing) level of treatment after a significant amount of sediment and other pollutants are removed. Units come with various cartridge configurations (for use in series with bag filters) or with a larger single cartridge filtration unit (with multiple filters within).

Appropriate Applications:

- Effective for the removal of sediment (sand, silt, and some clays) and metals, as well as the reduction of BOD, turbidity, and hydrocarbons. Hydrocarbons can effectively be removed with special resin cartridges.
- Filters can be used to provide secondary treatment to water treated via settling or basic filtration.

Implementation:

- The filters require delivery to the site and initial set up. The vendor can provide assistance.

Maintenance:

- The cartridges require replacement when the pressure differential equals or exceeds the manufacturer's recommendation.

Costs

- Sediment control costs vary considerably depending on the dewatering and sediment treatment system that is selected. Pressurized filters tend to be more expensive than gravity settling, but are often more effective. Simple tanks are generally rented on a long-term basis (one or more months) and can range from \$360 per month for a 1,000 gallon tank to \$2,660 per month for a 10,000 gallon tank. Mobilization and demobilization costs vary considerably.

Inspection and Maintenance

- Inspect and verify that dewatering BMPs are in place and functioning prior to the commencement of activities requiring dewatering.
- Inspect dewatering BMPs daily while dewatering activities are being conducted.

- Inspect all equipment before use. Monitor dewatering operations to ensure they do not cause offsite discharge or erosion.
- Sample dewatering discharges as required by the General Permit.
- Unit-specific maintenance requirements are included with the description of each unit.
- Sediment removed during the maintenance of a dewatering device may be either spread onsite and stabilized, or disposed of at a disposal site as approved by the owner.
- Sediment that is commingled with other pollutants should be disposed of in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations and as approved by the owner.

References

Blueprint for a Clean Bay: Best Management Practices to Prevent Stormwater Pollution from Construction Related Activities; Santa Clara Valley Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program, 1995.

Stormwater Quality Handbooks - Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual, State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), March 2003; Updated March 2004.

Stormwater Management for Construction Activities, Developing Pollution Prevention Plans and Best Management Practices, EPA 832-R-92005; USEPA, April 1992.

Labor Surcharge & Equipment Rental Rates, April 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

Erosion and Sediment Control Manual, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, February 2005.